

We Claim:

1. A sculpted fabric for the manufacture of a tissue web, having a tissue machine contacting side and a tissue contacting side, and comprising, on the tissue contacting side an upper porous member comprising a base with nonwoven elevated regions thereon comprising a first group of nonwoven raised elements and a second group of nonwoven raised elements, both raised relative to the base, wherein the first group of nonwoven raised elements extends in at least a first direction and the second group of nonwoven raised elements extends in at least a second direction, wherein the first and second groups of nonwoven raised elements are arranged on the base to produce elevated and depressed regions defining a three-dimensional tissue contacting surface comprising:

- a) a first background region having a set of substantially parallel first elevated regions comprising at least a subset of the first group of nonwoven raised elements, and comprising a first group of depressed regions, wherein the first elevated regions and the first depressed regions alternate;
- b) a second background region having a set of substantially parallel second elevated regions comprising at least a subset of the second group of nonwoven raised elements, and comprising a second group of depressed regions, wherein the second elevated regions and the second depressed regions alternate; and,
- c) a transition region positioned between the first and second background regions, wherein the first elevated regions of the first background region terminate and the second elevated regions of the second background region terminate.

2. The sculpted fabric of Claim 1, wherein the upper porous member consists essentially of nonwoven materials.

3. The sculpted fabric of Claim 2, wherein the sculpted fabric consists essentially of nonwoven materials.

4. The sculpted fabric of Claim 2, wherein the upper porous member is joined to an underlying strength layer.

5. The sculpted fabric of Claim 4, wherein the underlying strength layer comprises a woven fabric.

6. The sculpted fabric of Claim 1, wherein the base of the upper porous member is unitary with at least one of the first group of nonwoven raised elements or the second group of nonwoven raised elements.

7. The sculpted fabric of Claim 1, wherein the sculpted fabric is substantially unitary.

8. The sculpted fabric of Claim 1, wherein the sculpted fabric comprises a three-dimensional fibrous nonwoven layer.

9. The sculpted fabric of Claim 1, wherein the sculpted fabric comprises a nonwoven layer of substantially uniform basis weight.

10. The sculpted fabric of Claim 1, wherein the upper porous member comprises a fibrous nonwoven web of substantially nonuniform basis weight.

11. The sculpted fabric of Claim 1, wherein the upper porous member comprises a fibrous nonwoven web.

12. The sculpted fabric of Claim 11, wherein the base of the upper porous member comprises a fibrous nonwoven web.

13. The sculpted fabric of Claim 1, wherein at least one of the first elevated regions of the first background regions overlap with at least one of the second elevated regions of the second background region within the transition region by a distance of 10 mm or less.

14. The sculpted fabric of Claim 1, wherein the first direction of the first group of nonwoven raised elements is in the cross-machine direction.

15. The sculpted fabric of Claim 1, wherein the first direction of the first group of nonwoven raised elements at an acute angle to the cross-machine direction.

16. The sculpted fabric of Claim 1, wherein the first direction of the first group of nonwoven raised elements is in the machine direction.

17. The sculpted fabric of Claim 1, wherein the first direction of the first group of nonwoven raised elements is at an acute angle to the machine direction.

18. The sculpted fabric of Claim 1, wherein the first direction of the first group of nonwoven raised elements is substantially orthogonal to the second direction of the second group of nonwoven raised elements.

19. The sculpted fabric of Claim 1, wherein the first direction of the first group of nonwoven raised elements is at an acute angle to the second direction of the second group of nonwoven raised elements.

20. The sculpted fabric of Claim 1, wherein the first direction of the first group of nonwoven raised elements is substantially the same as the second direction of the second group of nonwoven raised elements.

21. The sculpted fabric of Claim 1, wherein the transition region has greater surface depth than the first background region.

22. The sculpted fabric of Claim 1, wherein the transition region has greater surface depth than the second background region.

23. The sculpted fabric of Claim 1, wherein the transition region is filled.

24. The sculpted fabric of Claim 1, wherein the transition region has substantially the same surface depth of the first background region.

25. The sculpted fabric of Claim 1, wherein the transition region has substantially the same surface depth of the second background region.

26. The sculpted fabric of Claim 1, wherein each nonwoven raised element of the first group of nonwoven raised elements has a width and the maximum plane difference of the first group of nonwoven raised elements is at least about 30% of the width of one of the nonwoven raised elements of the first group of nonwoven raised elements.

20

27. The sculpted fabric of Claim 1, wherein the maximum plane difference of the first group of nonwoven raised elements is at least about 0.12 mm.

28. The sculpted fabric of Claim 1, wherein each nonwoven raised element of the second group of nonwoven raised elements has a width and the maximum plane difference of the second group of nonwoven raised elements is at least about 30% of the width of one nonwoven raised element of the second group of nonwoven raised elements.

25

29. The sculpted fabric of Claim 1, wherein the maximum plane difference of the second group of nonwoven raised elements is at least about 0.12 mm.

30. The sculpted fabric of Claim 1, wherein the first background region has a first background texture and the second background region has a second background texture.

31. The sculpted fabric of Claim 30, wherein the first background texture of the first background region is substantially the same as the second background texture of the second background region.

32. The sculpted fabric of Claim 30, wherein the first background texture of the first background region is different than the second background texture of the second background region.

33. The sculpted fabric of Claim 1, wherein each nonwoven raised element of the first group of nonwoven raised elements has a first beginning point and a first ending point, each nonwoven raised element of the second group of nonwoven raised elements has a second beginning point and a second ending point wherein the first ending point of at least one of the nonwoven raised elements of the first group of nonwoven raised elements is separated in the transition region by a gap having a width ranging from about 10 mm to about negative 10 mm from the second ending point of at least one of the nearest nonwoven raised elements of the second group of nonwoven raised elements.

34. The sculpted fabric of Claim 33, wherein the gap has a width ranging from about 4 mm to about negative 4 mm.

35. The sculpted fabric of Claim 1 wherein the maximum distance between adjacent nonwoven raised elements of the first group of nonwoven raised elements is at least 0.3 mm.

36. The sculpted fabric of Claim 35, wherein the maximum distance between adjacent nonwoven raised elements of the first group of nonwoven raised elements is greater than the width of one of the adjacent nonwoven raised elements of the first group of nonwoven raised elements.

37. The sculpted fabric of Claim 1, wherein the maximum distance between adjacent nonwoven raised elements of the second group of nonwoven raised elements is at least 0.3 mm.

38. The sculpted fabric of Claim 37, wherein the maximum distance between adjacent nonwoven raised elements of the second group of nonwoven raised elements is greater than the width of one of the adjacent nonwoven raised elements of the second group of nonwoven raised elements.

39. The sculpted fabric of Claim 1, wherein the sculpted fabric is a forming wire.

40. The sculpted fabric of Claim 1, wherein the sculpted fabric is a through air drying fabric.

41. The sculpted fabric of Claim 1, wherein the sculpted fabric is a transfer fabric.

42. The sculpted fabric of Claim 1, wherein the tissue contacting surface of the sculpted fabric is non-macroscopically monoplanar.

43. The sculpted fabric of Claim 1, wherein the tissue contacting surface of the sculpted fabric is macroscopically monoplanar.

44. The sculpted fabric of Claim 1, wherein the base fabric comprises a non-woven material.

- 45.** The sculpted fabric of Claim 1, wherein the base fabric comprises a woven material.